

STATINTL

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

Klein's Client Seeks U.S. Contract

By Drew Pearson and
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One important chapter in the unique career of Maj. Gen. Julius Klein, close confidant of Sen. Thomas Dodd (D-Conn.), is his lobbying for a former Nazi company to get a \$75 million contract to manufacture arms for the U.S. armed forces.

Klein is the foreign agent who induced Sen. Dodd to go to Germany to rescue his, Klein's, public relations accounts at a time when those accounts were jeopardized by a Senate investigation.

Thanks to the fact that a U.S. Senator who is a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, a close friend of President Johnson's, and a former Nazi War Crimes prosecutor undertook this mission, Klein was able to retain his West German clients.

One of these is Rheinmetall of Dusseldorf, Hitler's second-largest arms manufacturer, which had been seeking a Defense Department contract to manufacture the 20-mm. Hispano-Suiza rapid-firing cannon. Klein lobbied vigorously for this contract, a contract which had the following reverberations in the United States:

- It contributed to the closing of the 150-year-old Springfield, Mass., Armory which has been turning out weapons for the American Army ever since the Revolutionary War.
- It was opposed by Jewish

leaders throughout the U.S. because of Rheinmetall's past Nazi connections.

Rheinmetall's War Record

Gen. Klein has made much of his religion. He has boasted that he is a past commander of the Jewish War Veterans, and in one of his many lengthy letters to editors protesting this column's reporting of his connections with Sen. Dodd, Gen. Klein mentioned the fact that he was a Jew no less than eleven times.

Nevertheless, Klein served as a paid agent and did his best to get a U.S. contract for a company which employed slave labor during the war, never made restitution to these unfortunate victims, and is run by five officers, three of whom are former Nazi Party members.

Two, president Otto Paul Caesar and Ernest Boume, are reported to have been plant managers for Rheinmetall Borsig AG during the war.

According to a protest registered with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara by Adolph Held, president of the Jewish Labor Committee, Rheinmetall "sought out and employed concentration camp inmates for exploitation in its arms factories."

"A special camp for Jewish women and girls recruited from Buchenwald by Rheinmetall was built by Rheinmetall at Sommerda in Thuringia. Over 1200 Jewish wom-

en were employed in that camp alone. The evidence is overwhelming that they were forced to work under the most inhumane circumstances."

Yet Gen. Klein's client had refused to pay restitution to these survivors. Other Nazi companies, including Krupp and I. G. Farben, had paid amounts ranging from \$500,000 to \$7 million. But even though there are nearly 1000 survivors of the Rheinmetall slave camps still alive—many of them now American citizens—Rheinmetall, until the Dodd-Klein columns, had refused to pay a cent.

Klein's Passionate Pleas

Despite this, Klein pleaded Rheinmetall's case passionately before the Defense and State Departments, beginning over a year ago. Government officials state that he even advised Rheinmetall to stand pat and not pay restitution to slave labor camp victims.

Both the U.S. Defense Department and the West German Defense Department took a strong stand that Rheinmetall must pay. The German Defense Minister even informed Washington not to sign a contract until Gen. Klein's client paid compensation to the Jewish Claims Conference.

Nevertheless, Gen. Klein wrote then Assistant Secretary of State William Tyler, April 5, 1965: "I think it might be taken without question that I, as past National Commander of the Jewish War Veterans,

a participant in the Restitution Treaty negotiations, and a member of the founding of the first Jewish Claims Conference, would never have undertaken to represent Rheinmetall without certain knowledge of their complete innocence of such charges as have been alleged."

Contradicting Klein, the State Department stated officially that three of Rheinmetall's officers were former Nazis and that the company had employed slave labor.

Despite this, Gen. Klein continued to represent Rheinmetall and continued his barrage of letters supporting them in getting a \$75-million arms contract which would help close the Springfield Armory. This caused such resentment among Klein's fellow Jews that the Jewish War Veterans, on whose name he had traded, threatened to kick him out. This would have been a serious blow.

In this predicament he could not get aid from his old friend Senator Dodd, who had helped him with the German clients. Dodd is not a Jew. So Klein appealed to the leading Jew in the Senate, Jacob Javits of New York.

And Javits, whose brother is now defending Klein before the Senate Ethics Committee, wrote an unusual letter bailing Klein out. Quotes from this letter and Sen. Javits' comment will follow in tomorrow's column.

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